

PRESS RELEASE

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Primary Care Providers and All Others Invited to Take Advantage of TTI-Funded Trainings

Hagåtña, Guam – *The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (DMHSA) received \$221,000 from the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) for participation in the Transformation Transfer Initiative (TTI) in 2013. TTI will provide opportunities for strengthening Guam's behavioral health system of care, starting with two trainings: the **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** and the **Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Providers**.*

DMHSA is collaborating with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) based in Boulder, Colorado to facilitate the development of trained trainers in Guam throughout 2013, starting with the following two TTI-funded trainings:

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Mental Health First Aid is a groundbreaking public education program that helps individuals to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. This 12-hour course will train participants to become mental health first aiders, and to be knowledgeable of the risk factors, warning signs, impact and common treatments for mental health problems. Participants will learn to apply the 5-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources and knowledge to help an individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care.

Nationally, this training has benefited a variety of audiences and key professions, including: primary care professional, employers and business leaders, faith communities, school personnel and educators, state police and corrections officers, nursing home staff, mental health authorities, state policymakers, volunteers, youth, families and the general public. The first MHFA training is on March 8 and 9 (Friday and Saturday) for a maximum of 40 individuals. A second 32-hour Mental Health First Aid *Training of Trainers* is tentatively planned for the week of June 17th. This T4T will be confirmed with The National Council and up to 30 trainer candidates will be recruited to include those who did not make the limited seating for the March MHFA training.

Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Providers

A collaborative project of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) and the Western Interstate Commission of the Higher Education (WICHE), this suicide prevention toolkit and

training was specifically designed for primary care providers to provide them the education and support needed to identify and address the critical needs of suicidal patients. The Toolkit brings best practices in suicide prevention to community services providers and offers them tools for improving their detection and intervention skills. The toolkit also includes a system for developing an office protocol which details specific actions to be taken when a suicidal patient is identified, making suicide prevention a collaborative effort undertaken by the entire primary care office.

The Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Primary Care Providers training is 2 hours long, followed by 2 additional hours for the training-for-trainers component, scheduled on optional dates: March 7 (Thursday), March 11 (Monday), and March 12 (Tuesday). Trainings will be held from 9am to 3pm at the DMHSA Training Room. Interested primary care workers (to include doctors, nurses and social workers) may contact the DMHSA Prevention and Training branch for registration and other details. A maximum of sixty (60) training participants will be served.

Both trainings will be led by Dr. Jeremy Vogt, US-certified instructor and psychology fellow at the WICHE Mental Health Program, and Dr. Tamara DeHay, US-certified instructor and Senior Project Director at the WICHE Mental Health Program.

DMHSA Acting Director Rey M. Vega encourages the public, especially those in the primary health care sector, to take advantage of the TTI-funded trainings: "Addressing the mental health needs of our community is our main goal. By strengthening the skills among those who are in the forefront, we will be able to improve the quality and efficiency of our services."

For more information on the Transformation Transfer Initiative and to register to receive training, contact the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention and Training branch at (671) 477-9079 through 9083 or visit www.peaceguam.org.

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